

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A.)

SUBJECT: ASSESSMENT OF US-BULGARIAN RELATIONS

1. RULING COMMUNIST PARTY IS IN COMPLETE CONTROL OF THE GOVERNMENT AND THE COUNTRY WHICH IS ENJOYING STABILITY AND REASONABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH, THANKS TO SOVIET SUPPORT. BULGARIAN FOREIGN POLICY AND TRADE ARE SOLIDLY LINKED TO THAT OF THE SOVIET UNION, THEREFORE IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT THE IMPROVEMENT IN US-SOVIET RELATIONS HAS BEEN REFLECTED HERE.

2. AFTER YEARS OF VERY POOR RELATIONS, THERE HAS BEEN A DISCERNIBLE IMPROVEMENT IN US-BULGARIAN RELATIONS DURING THE LAST THREE OR FOUR MONTHS. WHERE HAVE THE CHANGES BEEN NOTED -- ANTI-AMERICAN PROPAGANDA HAS BEEN TONED DOWN CONSIDERABLY WHICH WE ARE ASSURED, IS A RESULT OF A GOB POLICY DECISION. SINCE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR FOREIGN TRADE LUKANOV'S VISIT TO THE US THE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE US AND ITS MARKETS HAS IMPROVED, AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN ARE WELCOMED. THEY ARE COMING HERE IN CONSIDERABLE NUMBERS TO EXPLORE MARKETS AND LONG RANGE COMMERCIAL POSSIBILITIES. AD HOC CULTURAL,

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EDUCATIONAL AND SCIENTIFIC EXCHANGES CONTINUE BUT IN

A MUCH FRIENDLIER ATMOSPHERE. THE EMBASSY NO LONGER HAS DIFFICULTIES IN OBTAINING ACCESS TO GOB OFFICIALS AND BULGARS HAVING BUSINESS WITH THE EMBASSY SEEM TO COME AND GO AT WILL WITHOUT EXPERIENCING ANY DIFFICULTIES. AFTER YEARS OF DENIAL, ON OCTOBER 4 THE FOREIGN MINISTRY BEGAN ISSUING MULTIPLE ENTRY VISAS TO OUR NON-DIPLOMATIC AMERICAN STAFF MEMBERS.

3. ALTHOUGH GOB HAS DISPLAYED A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF GOODWILL AND INDICATED IT WOULD LIKE TO IMPROVE RELATIONS, THE HARD CORE PROBLEMS REMAIN. USG INSISTS ON SIGNING A CONSULAR AGREEMENT BEFORE IT WILL CONSIDER OTHER ISSUES. ADDITIONALLY, USG WANTS TO ASSURE EDUCATIONAL, CULTURAL AND OTHER EXCHANGES AND THEREFORE INTENDS TO SEEK A CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC AGREEMENT. THE GOB FOR ITS PART WANTS A TRADE AND COMMERCE AGREEMENT WHICH WILL GIVE IT MFN AND EXIM BANK CREDITS.

4. ACTUAL US INTERESTS IN BULGARIA ARE MINIMAL AND THE CURRENT IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS SO FRAGILE THAT EFFORTS TO BROADEN RELATIONS MIGHT APPEAR FUTILE, NONETHELESS IT IS IMPORTANT TO BRING BULGARIA ALONG THE ROAD TO DETENTE AND THERE ARE BENEFITS TO BE HAD. IN THIS CONNECTION THE FOLLOWING IS SUGGESTED:

A) CONSULAR AGREEMENT: NEGOTIATIONS ON AN AGREEMENT HAVE BEEN UNDER WAY FOR NUMBER OF YEARS. WE ARE NOW IN WHAT IS HOPEFULLY THE FINAL STAGES. THE GOB HAS SUGGESTED THAT THE US NEGOTIATOR COME TO SOFIA IN OCTOBER OR DECEMBER TO WORK OUT THE FINAL ARTICLES AND TO ATTEMPT TO RESOLVE THE OUTSTANDING QUESTION OF DUAL CITIZENSHIP. THIS THORNY ISSUE HAS BEEN SETTLED WITH OTHER SOCIALIST COUNTRIES AND SHOULD BE RESOLVABLE HERE. IT REQUIRES A POLITICAL DECISION WHICH I SUSPECT WILL NOT BE MADE UNTIL WE HAVE INDICATED WHO WILL SIGN FOR US AND WHERE AND WHEN WE ENVISAGE THE SIGNING TO TAKE PLACE. THE GOB HAS SUGGESTED THAT THE SECRETARY COME TO SOFIA FOR THE SIGNING. THE EMBASSY WOULD WELCOME SUCH A VISIT BUT RECOGNIZES THAT OTHER CONSIDERATIONS MAY MAKE THIS PROHIBITIVE IN THE NEAR FUTURE. IF THE LATTER IS THE CASE, DEPUTY PREMIER POPOV (WHO IS

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SCHEDULED TO VISIT THE STATES PREFERABLY TO DISCUSS TRADE) SHOULD BE INVITED TO WASHINGTON TO SIGN THE CONSULAR AGREEMENT FOLLOWING WHICH HE WOULD HAVE BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS ON FURTHER IMPROVING RELATIONS AND THEN MAKE AN EXTENSIVE VISIT OF US INDUSTRIAL AND AGRICULTURAL SITES.

B) DIVIDED FAMILIES: THE ISSUANCE OF VISAS TO OVER

30 PERSONS BELONGING TO DIVIDED FAMILIES SHOULD BE RAISED WITH THE GOB DURING ANY HIGH LEVEL VISIT. IF SUCH A VISIT IS SCHEDULED THE EMBASSY WOULD HAVE INCREASED LEVERAGE AND WOULD ATTEMPT TO RESOLVE MANY OF THE CASES PRIOR TO THE VISIT.

C) CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC AGREEMENT: ONCE A CONSULAR AGREEMENT IS SIGNED THE GOB WILL CERTAINLY PUSH FOR A TRADE AGREEMENT AND WE ON OUR PART SHOULD ASK THAT A DATE BE SET FOR THE BEGINNING OF NEGOTIATIONS ON A CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC EXCHANGE AGREEMENT. THE TRADE AND CULTURAL AGREEMENTS WILL MOST LIKELY HAVE TO MOVE IN TANDEM.

D) TRADE AND COMMERCIAL AGREEMENT: THE GOB IS EAGERLY SEEKING A TRADE AND COMMERCIAL AGREEMENT WITH THE US WHICH WILL BRING MFN AND EXIM BANK CREDITS. THE BULGARS ARE AWARE OF THE CURRENT CONGRESSIONAL STAND ON MFN FOR COMMUNIST COUNTRIES AND APPRECIATE THE ADMINISTRATION'S POSITION AND EFFORTS IN THIS REGARD. THEY CONTINUE TO HOPE MFN WILL BE FORTHCOMING IN 1974. GOB RECOGNIZES A SETTLEMENT WITH THE AMERICAN BOND HOLDERS COUNCIL ON OUTSTANDING BONDS MUST BE REACHED BEFORE EXIM BANK CREDITS WILL BE AVAILABLE AND CLAIMS IT INTENDS TO SETTLE THE ISSUE.

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